

The Resilient Library Newsletter

December 20, 2020

Volume 3, Issue 3

PLEASE NOTE:

Many of the images and underlined text in this newsletter have hyperlinks to their corresponding websites

Press Ctrl+click on images and underlined text to be directed to those websites

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Singing My Dad Back to Me

For a moment, songs let us share the same space in our minds, though it's only as temporary as the memory occupying his.

By Estelle Erasmus, [The New York Times](#)

As Alzheimer's disease lowers its veil over my father, one of the few ways to penetrate through his fog is music. Luckily, he prepared for that decades ago by encouraging my love of singing. My career took me in the direction of words rather than music, so these days I sing just for friends and family, which has turned out to be surprisingly useful in connecting with my father.

Until recently my octogenarian parents, who live five hours away from me in an independent living community, were on lockdown, so I haven't seen them since last November. But I call them all the time.

His illness seems to be getting worse; recently he asked my mom when



they were getting together with his long-dead parents. Although he sometimes confuses me with my sister, he remembers my voice. Not my speaking voice—my singing voice.

Over the phone, I sing the chorus from his favorite song. "*You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray. You'll never know, dear, how much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine away.*" "Your voice sounds beautiful," he says. "Thank you, Estelle. I love you."

Studies have shown that musical memories of old favorite songs [engage broader neural pathways](#) than other types of memories, allowing people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia to feel the emotions connected with those memories. "[The 36-Hour Day](#)," a popular guide for people caring for those with dementia [see page 3 of this newsletter], notes that researchers have found that the brain stores and processes memories of emotions differently than memories

See **Singing** on page 2

of fact. Research in the journal *Brain* found that [daily exposure to long-known music can even improve cognitive outcomes in some Alzheimer's patients](#).

Before Alzheimer's ravaged his mind, my dad was the patriarch of our family, a business executive, used to managing people. During my childhood, he would take our family to concerts at Jones Beach Theater and shows on Broadway. By enrolling me in classical music, and later opera lessons, my parents supported my love of singing. I sang in the school choir, in camp plays, and later in competitions. When we'd vacation with my grandparents in the Catskills, my dad would convince the entertainment director to let me sing a song with the band. His eyes lit up when I took the stage.

Now the disease has taken away his memory, and erased his independence. My parents moved to a facility with memory care in August, where my mom has her own apartment. Someone checks on Dad hourly, and he's no longer in control of his daily schedule. An aide helps him shower, dress, hands him his medication, and makes sure he sleeps. It is rare if he can remember what he just ate for lunch.

Before I started singing to him, phone calls with Dad followed the same well-worn script. "Hi, Dad, how

are you?" "Coming along. Scary times. We can't go out. Can you go out?"

Dad would ask about my husband and our 11-year-old daughter, but struggling for her name, sometimes referring to her as "the big baby."

As the months of quarantine dragged on, I worried that he might not remember who I was when he saw me again. Desperate to reach him, unable to touch him, I videotaped myself singing "Summertime" from the show "Porgy and Bess," the same song I sang to my daughter when she was born, and posted it on Facebook.

"One of these mornings. You're gonna rise up singing. Then you'll spread your wings, and you'll take the sky. But 'til that morning there's a nothing can harm you. With daddy and mammy standing by." Mom told me Dad smiled with recognition when he saw the video. "That's Estelle," he said. Encouraged by his reaction, I made it more personal by singing songs to him over the phone.

In between visits with my mother, my dad receives physical therapy to help straighten his limping gait (from breaking his hip nearly a decade ago while bowling). He also joins the other residents on his floor for socially distanced walks in the courtyard, to watch movies, and for [Music & Memory](#) classes. And we

have our phone calls.

I ring him during the day, avoiding the "sundowning" hours of late afternoon and evening, when many Alzheimer's patients tend to become disoriented and confused. He used to give me requests, as if I were a D.J., but now he lets me choose the songs. We've covered show tunes, "Sunrise, Sunset," "Climb Every Mountain," and children's songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and even Dad's favorite funny song, "Camp Granada," Allan Sherman's ode to sleep-away camp. "Hello muddah, hello faddah. Here I am at Camp Granada. Camp is very entertaining. And they say we'll have some fun if it stops raining."

My daughter's sleep-away camp was canceled this summer. Instead, we spent time at the beach—and it flooded me with childhood memories of family excursions. One day as I strolled on the sand with my daughter, watching the ebb and flow of the tide, I flashed on the joy I'd felt jumping the undulating waves together with Dad, his hand holding mine tight.

On our last call, I told Dad how much I loved those carefree times from childhood. "I'm sorry, Estelle, I don't remember," he said, his voice cracking. "I forget a lot of things." "That's OK, Dad." I was upset, too, that a memory so dear to me had unspooled from Dad's mind. But I knew how to bring him back.

"Want to hear a song?" "Sure," he replied. I chose "Summertime." The irony is not lost on me that I'm singing the same song for Dad—at the end of his life—that I sang for my daughter at the beginning of hers. But singing to Dad isn't an investment in the future, it's an homage to the past.

"Summertime. And the livin' is easy. Fish are jumpin'. And the cotton is high. Oh, your daddy's rich and your ma is good lookin'. So, hush little baby. Don't you cry."

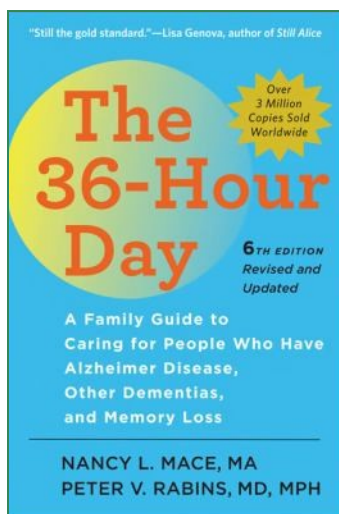
"Jones Beach, right? We saw a show," he said, as tears pooled in my eyes. "Yes, Daddy, that's right." For a moment we share the same space in our minds, though it's only as temporary as the memory occupying his.

The future during a pandemic is uncertain for everyone, especially a man with a damaged brain, whose body is starting to shut down in the throes of his disease.

So as I face the finality of losing my dad, I will hold on to him as long as I can, with music as our guiding force and new language. Song will let us linger in his past, until the wave of Alzheimer's overtakes us both.

Excerpted from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/well/family/singing-my-dad-back-to-me.html>

Book Spotlight— *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People Who Have Alzheimer's Disease, Other Dementias, and Memory Loss*



Available in print
at www.rvl.info

After 35 years, still the indispensable guide for countless families and professionals caring for someone with dementia.

Through five editions, *The 36-Hour Day* has been an essential resource for families who love and care for people with Alzheimer's disease. Whether a person has Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, he or she will face a host of problems. *The 36-Hour Day* will help family members and caregivers address these challenges and simultaneously cope with their own emotions and needs.

Featuring useful takeaway messages and informed by recent research into the causes of and the search for therapies to prevent or cure dementia, this edition includes new information on

- Devices to make life simpler and safer for people who have dementia
- Strategies for delaying behavioral and neuropsychiatric symptoms
- Changes in Medicare and other health care insurance laws
- Palliative care, hospice care, durable power of attorney, and guardianship
- Dementia due to traumatic brain injury
- Choosing a residential care facility
- Support groups for caregivers, friends, and family members

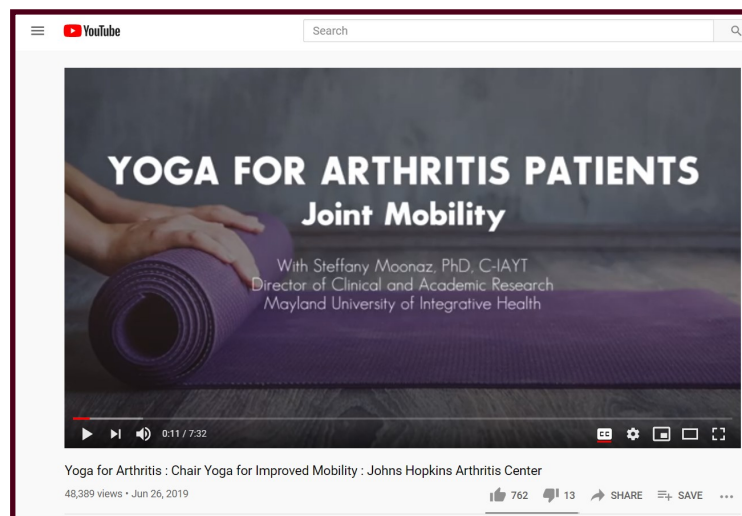
"This book empowers families with constructive and compassionate advice. A must read."

—Meryl Comer,
author of *Slow Dancing with a Stranger: Lost and Found in the Age of Alzheimer's*

Yoga for Arthritis Patients from Johns Hopkins Rheumatology—7-Minute Video

In this yoga sequence, Dr. Moonaz takes you through the movement of all major joints of the body. This can be a great activity for mornings to reduce stiffness or as a warm-up to any kind of exercise or a longer yoga practice. You can also use any of these movements throughout the day if you are starting to feel stiff or just need a little bit of movement in your day.

Link <https://youtu.be/yUnZzpX2KMw>



Looking for reading recommendations—NoveList Plus can help! NoveList Plus is a free-to-use database for all ages on the Salem Library's website. It provides recommendations for fiction and non-fiction, read-alike and listen-alike recommendations, series information and award winners all in one place.

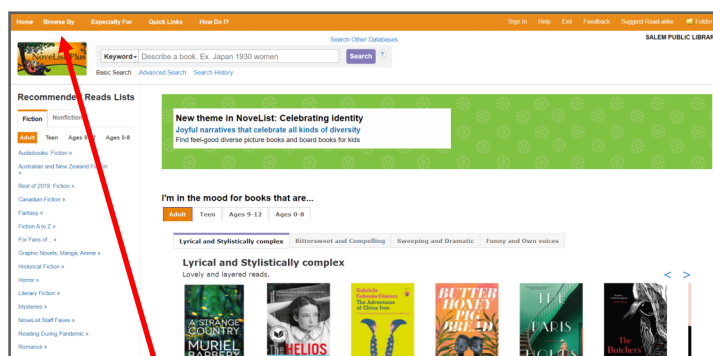
1. Go to <https://www.salemva.gov/Departments/Salem-Public-Library/Library-Databases>
2. Scroll down and click on "NOVELIST PLUS"

NOVELIST PLUS



Reading recommendations for fiction and non-fiction, read-alike and listen-alike recommendations, series information and award winners all in one place.

3. You will be directed to the NoveList Plus website



You can **Browse By:**

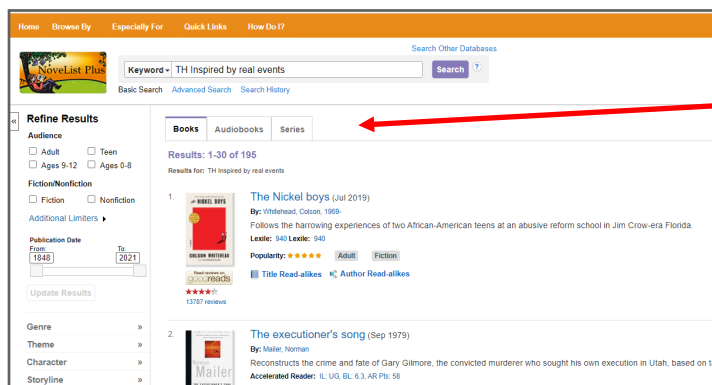
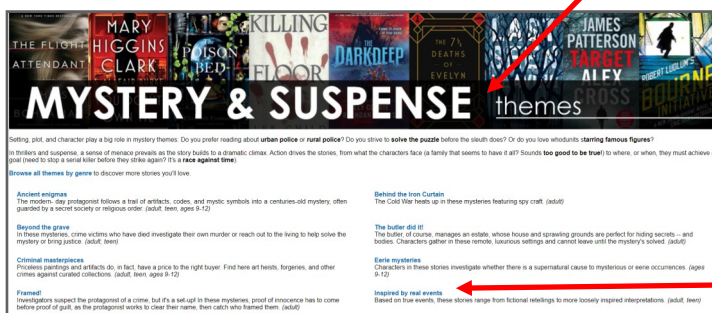
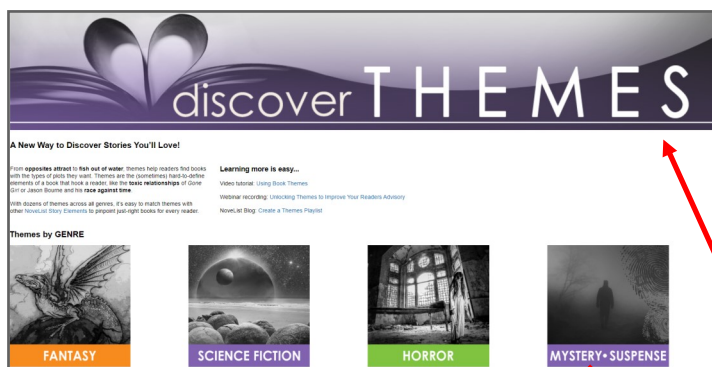
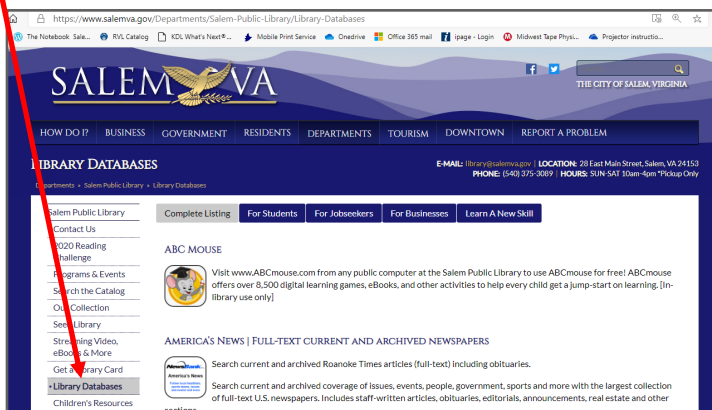
Genre - Fiction A to Z
Crime & Suspense
Mysteries
Romance and MORE

Appeal - Make Your Own Appeal Mix or Try...
Lyrical and Stylistically Complex
Bittersweet and Compelling
Sweeping and Dramatic and MORE

Themes - A new way to discover stories you'll love!
With dozens of themes across all genres, it's easy to match themes with other [NoveList Story Elements](#) to pinpoint just-right books for every reader. For example, clicking on "Mystery • Suspense" yields 26 different themes, such as "Inspired by real events—Based on true events, these stories range from fictional retellings to more loosely inspired interpretations. (adult, teen)" Clicking on the link will take you to recommended books, audiobooks, or series to read in this genre theme.

Award Winners - See next page for examples

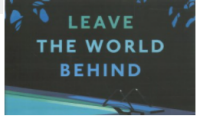
Audiobooks - See next page for examples



- 1—Recommended Reads Lists
 - 2—Featured Audiobooks
 - 3—New and Forthcoming Audiobooks
 - 4—Browse Audiobooks
 - 5—Holiday-Themed Audiobooks
- And More





Audiobooks

Featured Audiobooks **2**






Sheltering in a New York beach house with a couple that has taken refuge during a massive blackout, a family struggles for information about the power failure while wondering if the cut-off property is actually safe.

New and Forthcoming Audiobooks **3**

Holiday-themed stories **5**

Recommended Reads Lists

Adult Lists

- Fiction A-Z
- Mysteries and Thrillers
- Fantasy and Science Fiction
- African American Fiction
- Classics
- History Writing
- Must-Listen Nonfiction
- Life Stories
- Children & Teen Lists
- Famous Voices: Celebrity Readers
- Audiobooks for Road Trips
- Classics on Audio for Older Kids
- African American Older Kids Fiction on Audio
- Must-Listen Audio for Older Kids
- Teen Audiobooks Not to Miss
- Teen Fantasy and Science Fiction Audiobooks
- African American Teen Fiction on Audio

Browse Audiobooks **4**

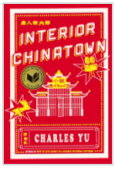



- Audiobook Awards
- Biographies
- Children & Young Adult Fiction
- Children & Young Adult Nonfiction
- Christian Fiction
- Classics
- General Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- History
- Mystery & Suspense
- Romance
- Science Fiction & Fantasy

Browse By **Award Winners**

- 1—Recent Award Winners
- 2—Awards by Genre
- 3—Popular Awards

Awards

Recent Award Winners: **1**

National Book Awards Man Booker Prize National Outdoor Book Awards World Fantasy Awards

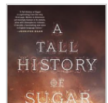
Popular Awards **3**

Adult	Teens	Children
Agatha Awards	Agatha Awards	ALA Notable Children's Books
Anthony Awards	Alex Award	Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards
Bram Stoker Awards	Carnegie Medal	Caldecott Medal
Edgar Allan Poe Awards	Carter G. Woodson Book Awards	Carter G. Woodson Book Awards
Governor General's Literary Awards	Edgar Allan Poe Awards	
Hugo Awards	Flora Stieglitz Straus Award	

Awards by Genre **2**

- Audiobooks
- Australia and New Zealand
- Biography and Memoir
- Canadian
- Christian Fiction
- Fantasy
- Historical Fiction
- History
- Horror
- Juvenile Nonfiction
- Literary
- Mysteries and Thrillers
- Notable Books
- Regional
- Romance
- Science Fiction
- Westerns

Featuring



You can also enter your own keyword search or choose from Recommended Reads Lists (Fiction or Nonfiction; Adult, Teen, Ages 9-12 or Ages 0-8).

You can create an account and save items to your personal folder to refer to later.

Home Browse By Especially For Quick Links How Do I?

Sign In Help Exit Feedback Suggest Read-alike Folder

SALEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Search Other Databases

Keyword Describe a book Ex. Japan 1930 women Search

Basic Search Advanced Search Search History

Recommended Reads Lists

Fiction Nonfiction

Adult Teen Ages 9-12 Ages 0-8

Audiobooks: Fiction »

Australian and New Zealand Fiction »

Best of 2019: Fiction »

Canadian Fiction »

Fantasy »

Fiction A to Z »

For Fans of... »

Graphic Novels, Manga, Anime »

Historical Fiction »

Horror »

Literary Fiction »

Mysteries »

NoveList Staff Faves »

Reading During Pandemic »

Romance »

Science Fiction »

Thrillers and Suspense »

Westerns »

New theme in NoveList: Celebrating identity

Joyful narratives that celebrate all kinds of diversity

Find feel-good diverse picture books and board books for kids









I'm in the mood for books that are...

Adult Teen Ages 9-12 Ages 0-8

Lyrical and Stylistically complex Bittersweet and Compelling Sweeping and Dramatic Funny and Own voices

Lyrical and Stylistically complex

Lovely and layered reads.

Want to make your own combo? Try our appeal mixer

PLEASE NOTE: Books and audiobooks recommended by the NoveList Plus database may or may not be included in the [Roanoke Valley Library Catalog](#).



From [Mental Health America](#)

HOW COPING TOOLS HELP

At some point in our lives, most of us will face times that are extra stressful or that even shake us to our core. At those times, having strong coping strategies can make a huge difference.

Of course, [exercising](#), focusing on your [spiritual life](#) and [getting enough rest](#)—and all the other Live Your Life Well tools—can be great supports in difficult situations. Other techniques can be particularly useful in dealing with tough times.



The research shows that:

- People who spent time writing about a difficult event had better health and less depression....
- People facing stress felt less

depressed after problem-solving

- People who often focus on positives in their lives are less upset by difficult memories

WAYS TO DEAL BETTER

Write It Out

Did you ever write a nasty e-mail when you felt angry but then deleted it? Chances are you still felt better though you didn't send it.



If you've suffered an upsetting event, writing about it can actually make you feel better. That's in part because writing organizes your thoughts, which makes the experience feel less chaotic. Writing also can offer you an emotional release, insight into yourself and the feeling that you can file the problem away.

Some thoughts to get started writing:

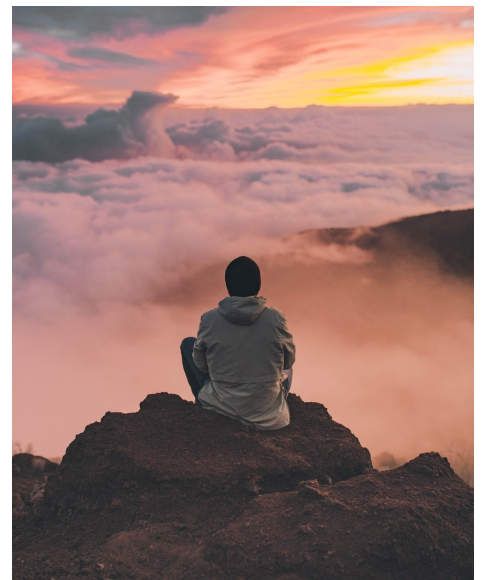
- Set aside 15 minutes a day for a few days to write about the event and how it made you feel
- Don't worry about grammar or artistry. This is just for you.
- Stick with it. At first writing about an upsetting experience may be painful, but over time it can help you get past the upset. Keep in mind, though, that if yours is an especially disturbing event... you may

want to do this [work with a therapist](#).

Tackle Your Problems

If you're dealing with a stressful situation, don't stew in self-pity or waste energy pointing blame at someone else. That just makes you feel less powerful. Instead, it makes sense to:

- **Write down the problems involved.** On paper they may seem more manageable than swirling in your head.
- **List as many solutions as possible.** For now, silence your internal judge. You can reject options later.
- **Assess your list.** Try asking yourself how you'd like this situation to end. Which options likely will get you there? You also can weigh pros and cons.
- **Accept reasonably good solutions.** Research suggests that searching for a perfect union breeds disappointment.



See **Deal Better** on page 7

- **Once you pick some solutions**, break them into reasonable chunks and make a concrete plan. You might set yourself some specific deadlines too.
- **Don't get discouraged** if the first solution you try doesn't pan out. Try another one on your list.



You can read more problem-solving tips and find a worksheet to get you organized:
<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/skills/module4>.

Shift Your Thinking

How you think about a problem affects both how much it upsets you and how well you tackle it. If possible, it pays to shift your mind away from negative thoughts or excessive worries. Try these suggestions:

- **Ask yourself how realistic your worry is.** Our imaginations can take us into situations that may never develop.
- **Set aside “worry” time each day.** Then whenever a negative thought intrudes, tell yourself to wait until the set time. You may feel better by then.
- **Focus on the good aspects of your life.**
- **Look at tough times as an opportunity to learn, grow or improve your situation.**

Maybe you've seen how supportive your friends are or learned how strong you can be in a tough time.

For more suggestions of reframing your thoughts, see the Live Your Life Well [Stay Positive](#) tool.

Get Support

Sometimes some basic help can make a big difference.

- **Ask someone to give you a hand** with any pressing tasks if you're overextended. You can reciprocate at a quieter time.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for advice.** No one knows everything.



- **Get emotional support.** Crying, sharing your frustrations or otherwise venting can release tension, relieve stress and help you move on. Consider getting professional help if you need it.

Excerpted from [Deal Better with Hard Times | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

To Be Continued in Next Week's Issue:

Create Joy and Satisfaction

10 Live Your Life Well Tools

These proven tools can help you feel stronger and more hopeful.

1. **Connect with others**
2. **Stay positive**
3. **Get physically active**
4. **Help others**
5. **Get enough sleep**
6. **Create joy and satisfaction**
7. **Eat well**
8. **Take care of your spirit**
9. **Deal better with hard times**
10. **Get professional help if you need it**





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[Roanoke Valley Libraries
Online Library Catalog
www.rvl.info](#)

[Roanoke Valley Libraries
e-Books & e-Audiobooks
rvl.overdrive.com](#)

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-PUBLIC-LIBRARY](https://www.salemva.gov/departments/salem-public-library)



Scan this QR code
to see our calendar
of events

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER: This free, weekly (during the pandemic) newsletter is intended for people over 50 and their caregivers.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please let us know by either:

- Calling the library between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day OR
- Email us at library@salemva.gov OR
- Fill out the information below and mail it to us.

Print copies will be available in our lobby between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day and we will post a link on our website to view this newsletter online.

Specify below how you would like to receive your subscription to this newsletter along with your contact information.

☐ Postal Service Mailing address: _____

☐ Email Email address: _____

LIBRARY SERVICES/EVENTS BEING OFFERED AT THIS TIME:

CONTACT FREE PICK-UP is available in our front lobby every day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for picking up requested items. Please call before heading to the library so that we can check out your items before you get here. *Thank you!*

LEAVE IT TO A LIBRARIAN For Adult Fiction: *The library is closed and you don't want to spend hours browsing the online catalog?* Call us, email us, or click the link on our website home page to give a hint or two (genre, authors you like). Tell us how many books you want. We'll fill a bag and leave it in the front foyer for you.

2020 READING CHALLENGE: Earn prizes for reading! Open to all ages. Call us, email us, or click the link on our website home page for more information.

SOCIALIZE WITH US! ON [FACEBOOK](#), [GOODREADS](#), OR [INSTAGRAM](#)—Click on the icons near the bottom of our [website home page](#).

Click on images or underlined text to be directed to the appropriate website.

Scan the QR code (bottom left on this page) to see our [Calendar of Events](#).



*The Staff at the Salem Library
wish you a safe and
happy holiday season!*